

# Parent Education Conscious Discipline

Conscious Discipline is an evidence-based program that helps us understand internal brain/body states in relation to discipline and learning.

# Week Six: Consequences

## Power of Intention

The Power of Intention states that mistakes are opportunities to learn. Learning comes through experimentation and failure, both social and academic. Our jobs as adults is to create an environment where children not only are safe, but also feel physically and emotionally safe enough to learn.

Most of us grew up with the sense that mistakes were punishable offenses. This early message we received can make it difficult for us to shift from a punishing to a teaching intention. It can also drive us to try to prevent our children from making mistakes in hopes we can save them from upset.

# Week Six: Consequences

## Consequences

Learning from the consequence of our actions requires two things:

1. We must reflect on the choices and the outcome in relation to our long-term goal. Was eating a pepperoni pizza in alignment with my goal of losing weight? Was a child throwing his sippy cup at you helpful in his goal of getting more to drink?
2. We must take ownership of our choices and the feelings they generate within. I feel disappointed that I've delayed reaching my weight loss goal. He felt angry about running out of milk.

# Week Six: Consequences

Consequences are a tool we use to motivate children to learn new skills and use skills they already possess. It can be difficult to watch children feel uncomfortable due to the results of their choices, but this discomfort - when coupled with our authentic empathy to help them manage their emotions - is essential to the learning process.

There are three types of consequences: natural, logical and imposed.

# Week Six: Consequences

## Natural Consequences

Natural consequences are the basic impact of an action or lack of action. Natural consequences are the most powerful tools for learning new behavior, so allow them to happen whenever it is safe. Letting children try and fail in a physically and emotionally safe environment so they can learn from their mistakes. Our job is to follow up with empathy and problem solving, not to prevent, save or belittle.

# Week Six: Consequences

## Logical Consequences

Natural consequences are the most powerful and effective consequences we can use. Use them whenever possible. When it is not possible to rely on a natural consequence, we may want to use a logical consequence. Logical consequences only work with children who have shown repeatedly that they know how to do the desired behavior and who feel connected. Children who don't have a firm grip on the skill or who feel disconnected will not respond well to logical consequences. In fact, logical consequences may worsen the situation!

# Week Six: Consequences

Logical Consequences requires us to:

1. Clearly and assertively set up the logical consequences ahead of time.
2. Ask the child to repeat back what will happen, “What will happen if you \_\_\_\_\_ (unwanted behavior) again?”
3. Use the Three R;s and the big E of logical consequences.

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Three R's and big E:

Related, Respectful, Reasonable and Empathy:

Related: The consequence is related to the child's behavior. If the goal is keeping the blocks off the floor, then a related consequence would be for the blocks to be off limits for a period of time, not for the child to lose dessert.

Respectful: the consequence is respectful in terms of the consequence itself and the way it is delivered. We've all heard about parents putting their kids on the side of a road with a sign that details their mistake. Is this a respectful consequence?

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Reasonable: The consequence is reasonable, meaning it is something the child can do, and it makes sense in terms of severity and duration. “Give it to me now or you’ll never play a game on my phone again!” Empty threats undermine our purpose, as do overly harsh consequences.

Empathy: When children blow it - and they will blow it- you must follow through on the consequence with an ample dose of empathy. Consequences followed by empathy will result in reflection, ownership of the action and change. Lectures, “I told you so,” “What did you think was going to happen,” backing down and harsh enforcement all undermine the consequence’s effectiveness and reate future power struggles.

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Problem solving is the process of recognizing a missing skill and teaching it in a way that children are able to hear and learn. Problem solving invites children to become part of the solution. All consequences, especially problem solving, require us to use all of the Skills of Conscious Discipline and operate from a problem solving Executive State.